



# Tenant & Leaseholder

# News

[thanet.gov.uk/myhome](http://thanet.gov.uk/myhome)

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# We asked how we could build a better relationship with you?



What you told us:	What we are doing:
<p><b>Improving communication</b> by keeping you informed, providing more face to face communication, listening and getting back to you was the top priority.</p>	<p>We are improving the information available to you on our <b>website</b> and will continue to publish <b>our newsletters</b>.</p> <p>We are developing a set of <b>service standards</b> which includes a commitment as to how quickly we will get back to you when you contact us.</p> <p>We aim to carry out more <b>face to face visits</b>, including visiting 10% of residents each year that we would not usually have contact with.</p>
<p><b>Provide well maintained homes and repair services.</b> Providing you with maintenance plans, improving the communal areas and ensuring contractors deliver a quality service was the second priority.</p>	<p>We have put a <b>repair service improvement plan</b> in place and are improving the information we provide to you about <b>maintenance plans</b> for your homes.</p> <p>We are developing different <b>satisfaction surveys</b> so that you can give us feedback on the quality of services you have received.</p>
<p>56% who completed the survey <b>would like to be further involved</b>.</p>	<p>We are <b>engaging residents</b> in the development of customer service standards and other service improvement consultations.</p>

Residents said we **already have a good relationship**.

You prefer to be collectively referred to as **'residents'** not 'customers'.

## £100 Prize draw winner!



Audrey from Margate (on the right) is our prize draw winner for completing the Building a Better Relationship survey. She was presented with £100 worth of Love to Shop vouchers by Cllr Jill Bayford, Cabinet Member for Housing. Audrey said she will use the vouchers to buy extra Christmas presents for her grandchildren.



## Have your say on our draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Management Policy. 2021-2026

We are updating our Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Management Policy and want to know what you think about them.

These documents set out information about the different kinds of tenancies we grant, including when we will grant them and how they are renewed at the end of a fixed term.

We propose to make a change so that if you are on a flexible tenancy, we will change this to a lifetime tenancy. We hope this will make you feel more secure in your home as you would not be moved on at the end of your fixed term tenancy.

To share your views on the proposed changes, visit: [thanet.gov.uk/draft-tenancy-strategy](https://thanet.gov.uk/draft-tenancy-strategy) or scan the QR code and complete the survey before Monday 20 December 2021.

For more information, please email: [housingprojects@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:housingprojects@thanet.gov.uk) or call: 01843 577000.



# Neighbourhood Inspections 2021



Over the summer we held 8 Neighbourhood Inspections across the district, visiting areas that have a high number of residential properties and communal areas. Almost 140 residents joined us on the inspections, community litter picks and at our central Housing Hubs.

Residents told us they like their **homes**, with some reporting they are spacious and situated in **accessible locations**. 58.1% are satisfied or very satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

## What our inspections identified:

The following areas need action and may need longer term solutions in order to improve satisfaction with neighbourhoods:

- **Communal repairs** - a total of 187 communal and individual jobs were raised.
- **Issues with communal areas** in the hallways and under the stairs such as rubbish and abandoned or stored household items.
- Issues with **grounds maintenance and external paths and hard surfaces**.

## Improvements suggested by residents include:

- **Litter and waste/rubbish** which includes improvement to bins/chutes, fly tipping, and more litter picks, particularly before grass cutting.
- **Safety/security and anti-social behaviour (ASB)**. Residents reported feeling intimidated by drinkers and addicts on stairs.
- **Parking** - customers want more or improved parking and enforcement of resident only parking.
- **Repairs and maintenance**.



# We are listening and acting upon what you have told us



## What we are doing:

- Encouraging residents to report communal repairs to help us get them fixed sooner.
- We are creating an **Estate Strategy** to set out that we will provide cleaner areas with suitable waste/rubbish provision and review parking, removal of abandoned vehicles and ground maintenance.
- Rubbish and abandoned items left in communal areas are a fire hazard and in the event of a fire may obstruct you leaving the building. To improve safety we are introducing **zero tolerance** on the storage of items in communal areas. We will put a legal notice on items left in communal areas and we will dispose of items if they are not removed.
- We are looking at how we tackle ASB by reviewing our ASB Policy.

## Keep sending us your photos!

We love seeing your photos and featuring them in our publications. Keep sending photos of the views from your home, communities or parts of Thanet that you enjoy.

Email your photos to **residentinvolvement@thanet.gov.uk**  
You can find lots of ways to get involved in this newsletter. For more information get in touch.

Visit: **thanet.gov.uk/getinvolved**  
Email: **residentinvolvement@thanet.gov.uk**  
Call: **01843 577090**





# Our Compliance Team

As your landlord, we have a legal duty to ensure we meet certain health and safety standards to keep you safe in your home.

It is the compliance team that does this work and they do this by making sure that services and checks to your gas boiler, electrical systems, lifts, areas that contain asbestos and communal water tanks are completed correctly and in time.

They also ensure that fire risk assessments are carried out as well as checks to fire alarm systems.

## Meet Terry

We met up with Terry, our Senior Compliance Administrator, who told us how much he loves his job and what his biggest challenge is:

"I am a bit of a geek when it comes to spreadsheets and processes, and this is much of my job. I check that services and checks are carried out on time and our systems are updated so that we can report on this. Sometimes inspections don't get carried out when they should and then I have to investigate why. The best part of my day is contacting residents to book appointments, I will explain why these checks are so important to be carried out and often learn a little about our residents at the same time."



## Our biggest challenge is accessing homes

The biggest challenge we have is our contractors (such as Gas Call or ElecSec) not being able to get access to people's homes. In the past twelve months we had over 1050 missed appointments for gas inspections, electrical checks and asbestos surveys. This has a massive impact on our servicing programs and the contractors charge us for missed appointments.

When we cannot get access to a property, we have to look at other options, including forcing entry into the home or taking legal action. We don't like doing this and would ALWAYS prefer for the resident to contact us directly so we can arrange a mutually convenient appointment.

## We are here to help

There are many reasons people don't let our contractors in, we've had incidents where some people are embarrassed about their home, having rent arrears, hoarding or other issues that they think they may get into trouble with. This is rarely the case and by engaging with us we can put steps in place to help.

**Our priority is to ensure the safety of our residents and visitors as well as ensuring that homes are safe.**



## How you can help us

If you receive a letter from a contractor asking to come round to do some work, remember it is for your safety. Please contact them if you are unable to make the appointment. The contractors will always work with you to reschedule for a more suitable time.

If you have any issues in relation to any service appointments please contact us via  
**email - [landlordcompliance@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:landlordcompliance@thanet.gov.uk)**  
**or 01843 577262.**

# Home Safety

**In this issue we're focusing on electrical safety in your home. Every 5 years we carry out an EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) on homes which checks the condition of the electrical installation. If you get a letter from us or our accredited contractors to have an EICR please don't delay in responding, it is for your safety.**

Our Home Safety leaflets cover fire, gas, asbestos, electrical and water safety and will soon be available on our website

**thanet.gov.uk/myhome**

Get in touch with us if you'd like a printed copy.



## Festive fire safety

- Do not overload plug sockets and never 'daisy chain' sockets.
- Always make sure fairy lights are unplugged at night or when no one is home.
- Make sure all fairy lights conform to British Standard (BS EN 60598) and haven't been damaged while in storage.
- Never leave candles unattended and make sure Christmas cards, decorations and wrapping paper is kept away from candles, fires, lights and heaters.
- If you have a real Christmas tree, make sure the tree always has enough water.
- Make sure someone is keeping an eye on the cooking at all times.
- Make sure any Christmas visitors know how to evacuate in the event of a fire.

## Margate fire caused by overheated laptop!

Don't forget, switch off and unplug electrical items such as laptops, phones and chargers when not in use, and to avoid leaving them on, or close to, bedding, cushions or other soft furnishings.



## Home energy saving tips

Following these tips could save energy, lower your bills and improve your carbon footprint:

- Switch off appliances that are on standby.
- Only fill the kettle with as much water as you need.
- Spend a minute less in the shower.
- Replace bulbs with LEDs or energy saving bulbs.
- Turn lights off when rooms are not in use.
- Turn your heating thermostat down by 1 degree.
- Set your heating and hot water to come on and off when you need them most.
- Wait until you have a full load of washing before putting your machine on.
- Provide your meter readings to your provider to avoid estimated bills.

Our energy saving service can offer help and advice to people wanting to save money on their bills, to find out more visit [thanet.gov.uk/energyinthehome](http://thanet.gov.uk/energyinthehome) or **email: [energysaving@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:energysaving@thanet.gov.uk) or call: 07920 784 779**. They can offer advice including :

- Grants to help pay off your energy debts.
- Winter fuel payment.
- Warm home discount scheme.
- Cold weather payments.



# Winter heating advice

Test your heating system before the cold weather sets in.



Make sure that your central heating system and boiler are working. If there are any problems, they can be fixed ready for the cold weather.

- Pick a day when the weather gets colder to test your heating.
- Switch on the heating. Leave it on for at least four hours. This can be done on a low setting, gradually increasing the temperature to the winter setting.
- Test thermostats and radiator controls by turning them up and down.
- Test radiators by checking they are hot from top to bottom.

If you find any problems please call **GAS CALL on 0800 012 9958**



## Frozen boiler condensate pipes

Frozen condensate waste pipes are a common problem in winter. Most modern boilers have condensate pipes taking water vapour away from your boiler. This makes it more energy efficient. The pipe is usually plastic. It runs from your boiler and discharges into an inside waste pipe or outside gully.

In cold weather the condensate pipe can freeze. This can happen even if it is insulated. If it freezes your boiler will automatically shut down. You will not have central heating or hot water.

How do you know if the condensate pipe is frozen?

- Bubbling sounds could come from the boiler or the pipe.
- A warning light on your boiler could come on.

Gas Call can thaw the pipe and tell you how to stop it freezing again.

If you do want to try thawing an outside pipe yourself you can:

1. Warm some water in the kettle - not boiling water. That could crack the pipe or scald you.
2. Stand away from the wall and slowly pour warm water onto the frozen pipe.
3. Do it again until the pipe has thawed.
4. Once the pipe is thawed, the boiler will need to be reset. Use the reset switch.
5. The boiler should fire up and run as normal.

If you find any problems please call **GAS CALL on 0800 012 9958**



## Christmas recipe.

Don't throw out your leftovers! Mix your leftover Christmas Day potatoes and veggies and lightly fry to make bubble and squeak - perfect with eggs and bacon for a Boxing Day brunch.



## Contacting the Tenant and Leaseholder Services

### General housing enquiries

Call: 01843 577 262

Email: [myhome@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:myhome@thanet.gov.uk)

### Household and communal repairs

Mears: 0800 023 4320

### Gas, hot water and heating

Gas Call Services: 0800 012 9958

Visit [thanet.gov.uk/myhome](http://thanet.gov.uk/myhome) for more information.

### For all other Thanet District Council services

Call: 01843 577 000

Email: [thanet.gov.uk](http://thanet.gov.uk)

Merry Christmas from all the staff in  
Tenant and Leaseholder Services.



If you need this in any other format please contact 01843 577262